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*As a Strong Bird
on Pinions Free*

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May 3. 03

To Helen Tupper

Dear

Gustav P. Mitchell

May you always be as generous
free.

Whitman, W.

LEAVES OF GRASS. .

*As a Strong Bird on
Pinions Free.*

AND OTHER POEMS.

STANFORD LIBRARY

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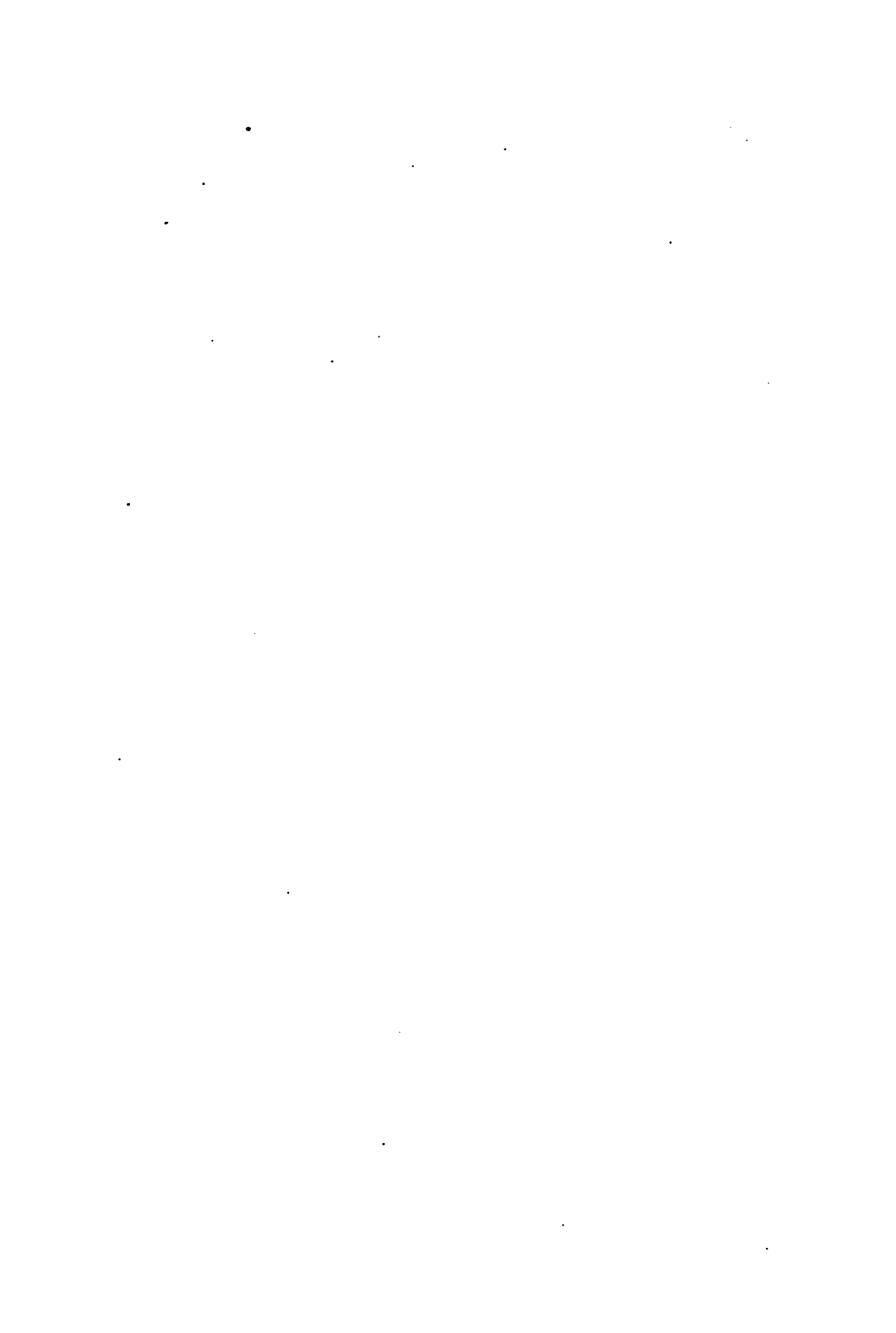
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PREFACE.

THE impetus and ideas urging me, for some years past, to an utterance, or attempt at utterance, of New World songs, and an epic of Democracy, having already had their published expression, as well as I can expect to give it, in *LEAVES OF GRASS*, the present and any future pieces from me are really but the surplusage forming after that Volume, or the wake eddying behind it. I fulfilled in that an imperious conviction, and the commands of my nature as total and irresistible as those which make the sea flow, or the globe revolve. But of this Supplementary Volume, I confess I am not so certain. Having from early manhood abandoned the business pursuits and applications usual in my time and country, and obediently yielded myself up ever since to the impetus mentioned, and to the work of expressing those ideas, it may be that mere habit has got dominion of me, when there is no real need of saying any thing further. . . . But what is life but an experiment? and mortality but an exercise? with reference to results beyond. And so shall my poems be. If incomplete here, and superfluous there, *n'importe*—the earnest trial and persistent exploration shall at least be mine, and other success failing, shall be success enough. I have been more anxious, anyhow, to suggest the songs of vital endeavor, and manly evolution, and furnish something for races of outdoor athletes, than to make perfect rhymes, or reign in the parlors. I ventured from the beginning, my own way, taking chances—and would keep on venturing.

I will therefore not conceal from any persons, known or unknown to me, who take interest in the matter, that I have the ambition of devoting yet a few years to poetic composition. . . . The mighty present age! To absorb, and express in poetry, any thing of it—of its world—America—cities and States—the

years, the events of our Nineteenth Century—the rapidity of movement—the violent contrasts, fluctuations of light and shade, of hope and fear—the entire revolution made by science in the poetic method—these great new underlying facts and new ideas rushing and spreading everywhere;—Truly a mighty age! As if in some colossal drama, acted again like those of old, under the open sun, the Nations of our time, and all the characteristics of Civilization, seem hurrying, stalking across, flitting from wing to wing, gathering, closing up, toward some long-prepared, most tremendous denouement. Not to conclude the infinite scenes of the race's life and toil and happiness and sorrow, but haply that the boards be cleared from oldest, worst incumbrances, accumulations, and Man resume the eternal play anew, and under happier, freer auspices. . . . To me, the United States are important because, in this colossal drama, they are unquestionably designated for the leading parts, for many a century to come. In them History and Humanity seem to seek to culminate. Our broad areas are even now the busy theatre of plots, passions, interests, and suspended problems, compared to which the intrigues of the past of Europe, the wars of dynasties, the scope of kings and kingdoms, and even the development of peoples, as hitherto, exhibit scales of measurement comparatively narrow and trivial. And on these areas of ours, as on a stage, sooner or later, something like an *eclaircissement* of all the past civilization of Europe and Asia is probably to be evolved.

The leading parts. . . . Not to be acted, emulated here, by us again, that role till now foremost in History—Not to become a conqueror Nation, or to achieve the glory of mere military, or diplomatic, or commercial superiority—but to become the grand Producing Land of nobler Men and Women—of copious races, cheerful, healthy, tolerant, free—To become the most friendly Nation, (the United States indeed,)—the modern composite Nation, formed from all, with room for all, welcoming all immigrants—accepting the work of our own interior development, as the work fitly filling ages and ages to come;—the leading Nation of peace, but neither ignorant nor incapable of being the leading Nation of war;—not the Man's Nation only, but the

Woman's Nation—a land of splendid mothers, daughters, sisters, wives.

Our America to-day I consider in many respects as but indeed a vast seething mass of *materials*, ampler, better, (worse also,) than previously known—eligible to be used to carry toward its crowning stage, and build for good the great Ideal Nationality of the future, the Nation of the Body and the Soul,*—no limit here to land, help, opportunities, mines, products, demands, supplies, &c.;—with (I think) our political organization, National, State, and Municipal, permanently established, as far ahead as we can calculate—but, so far, no social, literary, religious, or esthetic organizations, consistent with our politics, or becoming to us—which organizations can only come, in time, through native schools or teachers of great Democratic Ideas, Religion—through Science, which now, like a new sunrise, ascending, begins to illuminate all—and through our own begotten Poets and Literatures. . . . (The moral of a late well-written book on Civilization seems to be that the only real foundation walls and basis—and also *sine qua non* afterward—of true and full Civilization, is the eligibility and certainty of boundless products for feeding, clothing, sheltering every body—perennial fountains of physical and domestic comfort, with intercommunication, and with civil and ecclesiastical freedom;—and that then the esthetic and mental business will take care of itself. . . . Well, the United States have established this basis, and upon scales of extent, variety, vitality, and continuity, rivaling those of Nature; and have now to proceed to build an Edifice upon it. I say this Edifice is only to be fitly built by new

* The problems of the achievement of this crowning stage through future first-class National Singers, Orators, Artists, and others—of creating in literature an *imaginative* New World, the correspondent and counterpart of the current Scientific and Political New Worlds—and the perhaps distant, but still delightful prospect, (for our children, if not in our own day,) of delivering America, and, indeed, all Christian lands everywhere, from the thin, moribund, and watery, but appallingly extensive nuisance of conventional poetry—by putting something really alive and substantial in its place—I have undertaken to grapple with, and argue, in *DEMOCRATIC VISTAS*.

Literatures, especially the Poetic. I say a modern Image-Making creation is indispensable to fuse and express the modern Political and Scientific creations—and then the Trinity will be complete.)

When I commenced, years ago, elaborating the plan of my poems, and continued turning over that plan, and shifting it in my mind through many years, (from the age of twenty-eight to thirty-five,) experimenting much, and writing and abandoning much, one deep purpose underlay the others, and has underlain it and its execution ever since—and that has been the Religious purpose. Amid many changes, and a formulation taking far different shape from what I at first supposed, this basic purpose has never been departed from in the composition of my verses. Not of course to exhibit itself in the old ways, as in writing hymns or psalms with an eye to the church-pew, or to express conventional pietism, or the sickly yearnings of devotees, but in new ways, and aiming at the widest sub-bases and inclusions of Humanity, and tallying the fresh air of sea and land. I will see, (said I to myself,) whether there is not, for my purposes as poet, a Religion, and a sound Religious germenancy in the average Human Race, at least in their modern development in the United States, and in the hardy common fibre and native yearnings and elements, deeper and larger, and affording more profitable returns, than all mere sects or churches—as boundless, joyous, and vital as Nature itself—A germenancy that has too long been uncouraged, unsung, almost unknown. . . . With Science, the Old Theology of the East, long in its dotage, begins evidently to die and disappear. But (to my mind) Science—and may be such will prove its principal service—as evidently prepares the way for One indescribably grander—Time's young but perfect offspring—the New Theology—heir of the West—lusty and loving, and wondrous beautiful. For America, and for to-day, just the same as any day, the supreme and final Science is the Science of God—what we call science being only its minister—as Democracy is or shall be also. And a poet of America (I said) must fill himself with such thoughts, and chant his best out of them. . . . And as those were the convictions and aims, for good or bad, of

LEAVES OF GRASS, they are no less the intention of this Volume. As there can be, in my opinion, no sane and complete Personality—nor any grand and electric Nationality, without the stock element of Religion imbuing all the other elements, (like heat in chemistry, invisible itself, but the life of all visible life,) so there can be no Poetry worthy the name without that element behind all. The time has certainly come to begin to discharge the idea of Religion, in the United States, from mere ecclesiasticism, and from Sundays and churches and church-going, and assign it to that general position, chiefest, most indispensable, most exhilarating, to which the others are to be adjusted, inside of all human character, and education, and affairs. The people, especially the young men and women of America, must begin to learn that Religion, (like Poetry,) is something far, far different from what they supposed. It is, indeed, too important to the power and perpetuity of the New World to be consigned any longer to the churches, old or new, Catholic or Protestant—Saint this, or Saint that. . . . It must be consigned henceforth to Democracy *en masse*, and to Literature. It must enter into the Poems of the Nation. It must make the Nation.

The Four Years' War is over—and in the peaceful, strong, exciting, fresh occasions of To-day, and of the Future, that strange, sad war is hurrying even now to be forgotten. The camp, the drill, the lines of sentries, the prisons, the hospitals, —(ah! the hospitals!)—all have passed away—all seem now like a dream. A new race, a young and lusty generation, already sweeps in with oceanic currents, obliterating that war, and all its scars, its mounded graves, and all its reminiscences of hatred, conflict, death. So let it be obliterated. I say the life of the present and the future makes undeniable demands upon us each and all, South, North, East, West. . . . To help put the United States (even if only in imagination) hand in hand, in one unbroken circle in a chant—To rouse them to the unprecedented grandeur of the part they are to play, and are even now playing—to the thought of their great Future, and the attitude conformed to it—especially their great Esthetic, Moral, Scientific Future, (of which their vulgar material and

political present is but as the preparatory tuning of instruments by an orchestra,)—these, as hitherto, are still, for me, among my hopes, ambitions.

LEAVES OF GRASS, already published, is, in its intentions, the song of a great composite *Democratic Individual*, male or female. And following on and amplifying the same purpose, I suppose I have in my mind to run through the chants of this Volume, (if ever completed,) the thread-voice, more or less audible, of an aggregated, inseparable, unprecedented, vast, composite, electric *Democratic Nationality*.

Purposing, then, to still fill out, from time to time through years to come, the following Volume, (unless prevented,) I conclude this Preface to the first installment of it, pencilled in the open air, on my fifty-third birth-day, by wafting to you, dear Reader, whoever you are, (from amid the fresh scent of the grass, the pleasant coolness of the forenoon breeze, the lights and shades of tree-boughs silently dappling and playing around me, and the notes of the cat-bird for undertone and accompaniment,) my true good-will and love.

Washington, D. C., May 31, 1872.

W. W.

*ONE SONG, AMERICA, BEFORE I
GO.*

ONE song, America, before I go,
I'd sing, o'er all the rest, with trumpet sound,
For thee—the Future.

I'd sow a seed for thee of endless Nationality;
I'd fashion thy Ensemble, including Body and
Soul;
I'd show, away ahead, thy real Union, and how it
may be accomplish'd.

(The paths to the House I seek to make,
But leave to those to come, the House itself.)

Belief I sing—and Preparation;
As Life and Nature are not great with reference to
the Present only,
But greater still from what is yet to come,
Out of that formula for Thee I sing.

SOUVENIRS OF DEMOCRACY.

THE business man, the acquirer vast,
After assiduous years, surveying results, preparing
for departure,
Devises houses and lands to his children—bequeaths
stocks, goods—funds for a school or hos-
pital,
Leaves money to certain companions to buy tokens,
souvenirs of gems and gold ;
Parceling out with care—And then, to prevent all
cavil,
His name to his testament formally signs.

But I, my life surveying,
With nothing to show, to devise, from its idle
years,
Nor houses, nor lands—nor tokens of gems or gold
for my friends,
Only these Souvenirs of Democracy—In them—in
all my songs—behind me leaving,
To You, whoever you are, (bathing, leavening this
leaf especially with my breath—pressing on it
a moment with my own hands ;
—Here ! feel how the pulse beats in my wrists !—
how my heart's-blood is swelling, contract-
ing !)
I will You, in all, Myself, with promise to never
desert you,
To which I sign my name,

Walt Whitman

AS A STRONG BIRD ON PINIONS FREE.

1.

As a strong bird on pinions free,
Joyous, the amplest spaces heavenward cleaving,
Such be the thought I'd think to-day of thee, America,
Such be the recitative I'd bring to-day for thee.*

The conceits of the poets of other lands I bring thee
not,
Nor the compliments that have served their turn so
long,
Nor rhyme—nor the classics—nor perfume of foreign
court, or indoor library;
But an odor I'd bring to-day as from forests of
pine in the north, in Maine—or breath of an Illi-
nois prairie,
With open airs of Virginia, or Georgia, or Tennessee
—or from Texas uplands, or Florida's glades,
With presentment of Yellowstone's scenes, or Yo-
semite ;
And murmuring under, pervading all, I'd bring the
rustling sea-sound,
That endlessly sounds from the two great seas of the
world.

* Commencement Poem, Dartmouth College, N. H., June 26,
1872, on invitation United Literary Societies.

And for thy subtler sense, subtler refrains, O Union!
 Preludes of intellect tallying these and thee—mind-
 formulas fitted for thee—real, and sane, and large
 as these and thee;
 Thou, mounting higher, diving deeper than we knew
 —thou transcendental Union!
 By thee Fact to be justified—blended with Thought;
 Thought of Man justified—blended with God:
 Through thy Idea—lo! the immortal Reality!
 Through thy Reality—lo! the immortal Idea!

2.

Brain of the New World! what a task is thine!
 To formulate the Modern. . . . Out of the peerless
 grandeur of the modern,
 Out of Thyself—comprising Science—to recast
 Poems, Churches, Art,
 (Recast—~~may~~-be discard them, end them—May-be
 their work is done—who knows?)
 By vision, hand, conception, on the background of
 the mighty past, the dead,
 To limn, with absolute faith, the mighty living pre-
 sent.

And yet, thou living, present brain! heir of the dead,
 the Old World brain!
 Thou that lay folded, like an unborn babe, within its
 folds so long!
 Thou carefully prepared by it so long!—haply thou
 but unfoldest it—only maturest it;
 It to eventuate in thee—the essence of the by-gone
 time contain'd in thee;
 Its poems, churches, arts, unwitting to themselves,
 destined with reference to thee,
 The fruit of all the Old, ripening to-day in thee.

3.

Sail—sail thy best, ship of Democracy!
 Of value is thy freight—'tis not the Present only,
 The Past is also stored in thee!
 Thou holdest not the venture of thyself alone—not of
 thy western continent alone;
 Earth's *résumé* entire floats on thy keel, O ship— is
 steadied by thy spars;
 With thee Time voyages in trust—the antecedent
 nations sink or swim with thee;
 With all their ancient struggles, martyrs, heroes,
 epics, wars, thou bear'st the other continents;
 Theirs, theirs as much as thine, the destination-
 port triumphant:
 —Steer, steer with good strong hand and wary eye, O
 helmsman—thou carryest great companions,
 Venerable, priestly Asia sails this day with thee,
 And royal, feudal Europe sails with thee.

4.

Beautiful World of new, superber Birth, that rises to
 my eyes,
 Like a limitless golden cloud, filling the western sky;
 Emblem of general Maternity, lifted above all;
 Sacred shape of the bearer of daughters and sons;
 Out of thy teeming womb, thy giant babes in cease-
 less procession issuing,
 Acceding from such gestation, taking and giving con-
 tinual strength and life;
 World of the Real! world of the twain in one!
 World of the Soul—born by the world of the real
 alone—led to identity, body, by it alone;
 Yet in beginning only—incalculable masses of compo-
 site, precious materials,

By history's cycles forwarded—by every nation, lan-
 guage, hither sent,
 Ready, collected here—a reer, vast, electric World, to
 be constructed here,
 (The true New World—the world of orbic Science,
 Morals, Literatures to come,)
 Thou Wonder World, yet undefined, uniform'd—
 neither do I define thee;
 How can I pierce the impenetrable blank of the
 future?
 I feel thy ominous greatness, evil as well as good;
 I watch thee, advancing, absorbing the present,
 transcending the past;
 I see thy light lighting and thy shadow shadowing,
 as if the entire globe;
 But I do not undertake to define thee—hardly to com-
 prehend thee;
 I but thee name—thee prophecy—as now!
 I merely thee ejaculate!

Thee in thy future;
 Thee in thy only permanent life, career~thy own
 unloosen'd mind—thy soaring spirit;
 Thee as another equally needed sun, America—ra-
 diant, ablaze, swift-moving, fructifying all;
 Thee! risen in thy potent cheerfulness and joy—thy
 endless, great hilarity!
 (Scattering for good the cloud that hung so long—
 that weigh'd so long upon the mind of man,
 The doubt, suspicion, dread, of gradual, certain deca-
 dence of man;)
 Thee in thy larger, saner breeds of Female, Male—
 thee in thy athletes, moral, spiritual, South,
 North, West, East,
 (To thy immortal breasts, Mother of All, thy every
 daughter, son, endear'd alike, forever equal;)
 Thee in thy own musicians, singers, artists, unborn
 yet, but certain;

Thee in thy moral wealth and civilization, (until
 which thy proudest material wealth and civiliza-
 tion must remain in vain;)

Thee in thy all-supplying, all-enclosing Worship—
 thee in no single bible, saviour, merely,

Thy saviours countless, latent within thyself—thy
 bibles incessant, within thyself, equal to any,
 divine as any;

Thee in an education grown of thee—in teachers,
 studies, students, born of thee;

Thee in thy democratic fêtes, en masse—thy high
 original festivals, operas, lecturers, preachers;

Thee in thy ultimata, (the preparations only now
 completed—the edifice on sure foundations
 tied,)

Thee in thy pinnacles, intellect, thought—thy top-
 most rational joys—thy love, and godlike aspira-
 tion,

In thy resplendent coming literati—thy full-lung'd
 orators—thy sacerdotal bards—kosmic savans,

These! these in thee, (certain to come,) to-day I pro-
 phesy.

5

Land tolerating all—accepting all—not for the good
 alone—all good for thee;

Land in the realms of God to be a realm unto thy-
 self;

Under the rule of God to be a rule unto thyself.

(Lo! where arise three peerless stars,
 To be thy natal stars, my country—Ensemble—Evo-
 lution—Freedom,
 Set in the sky of Law.)

Land of unprecedented faith—God's faith!
 Thy soil, thy very subsoil, all upheav'd ;
 The general inner earth, so long, so sedulously draped
 over, now and hence for what it is boldly laid
 bare,
 Open'd by thee to heaven's light, for benefit or bale.

Not for success alone ;
 Not to fair-sail unintermitted always ;
 The storm shall dash thy face—the murk of war, and
 worse than war, shall cover thee all over ;
 (Wert capable of war—its tug and trials? Be capa-
 ble of peace, its trials ;
 For the tug and mortal strain of nations come at last
 in peace—not war ;)
 In many a smiling mask death shall approach, be-
 guiling thee—thou in disease shalt swelter ;
 The livid cancer spread its hideous claws, clinging
 upon thy breasts, seeking to strike thee deep
 within ;
 Consumption of the worst—moral consumption—
 shall rouge thy face with hectic :
 But thou shalt face thy fortunes, thy diseases, and
 surmount them all,
 Whatever they are to-day, and whatever through time
 they may be,
 They each and all shall lift, and pass away, and cease
 from thee ;
 While thou, Time's spirals rounding—out of thyself,
 thyself still extricating, fusing,
 Equable, natural, mystical Union thou—(the mortal
 with immortal blent,)
 Shalt soar toward the fulfilment of the future—the
 spirit of the body and the mind,
 The Soul—its destinies.

The Soul, its destinies—the real real,
 (Purport of all these apparitions of the real ;)

In thee, America, the Soul, its destinies ;
Thou globe of globes ! thou wonder nebulous !
By many a throe of heat and cold convuls'd—(by
these thyself solidifying ;)
Thou mental, moral orb ! thou New, indeed new,
Spiritual World !
The Present holds thee not—for such vast growth as
thine—for such unparallel'd flight as thine,
The Future only holds thee, and can hold thee.

\

THE MYSTIC TRUMPETER.

1.

HARK! some wild trumpeter—some strange musician,
Hovering unseen in air, vibrates capricious tunes to-
night.

I hear thee, trumpeter—listening, alert, I catch thy
notes,
Now pouring, whirling like a tempest round me,
Now low, subdued—now in the distance lost.

2.

Come nearer, bodiless one—haply, in thee resounds
Some dead composer—haply thy pensive life
Was fill'd with aspirations high—uniform'd ideals,
Waves, oceans musical, chaotically surging,
That now, ecstatic ghost, close to me bending, thy
cornet echoing, pealing,
Gives out to no one's ears but mine—but freely gives
to mine,
That I may thee translate.

3.

Blow, trumpeter, free and clear—I follow thee,
While at thy liquid prelude, glad, serene,
The fretting world, the streets, the noisy hours of
day, withdraw;

A holy calm descends, like dew, upon me,
 I walk, in cool refreshing night, the walks of Paradise,
 I scent the grass, the moist air, and the roses ;
 Thy song expands my numb'd, imbonded spirit—thou
 freest, launchest me,
 Floating and basking upon Heaven's lake.

4.

Blow again, trumpeter ! and for my sensuous eyes,
 Bring the old pageants—show the feudal world.

What charm thy music works !—thou makest pass before me,
 Ladies and cavaliers long dead—barons are in their
 castle halls—the troubadours are singing ;
 Arm'd knights go forth to redress wrongs—some in
 quest of the Holy Graal :
 I see the tournament—I see the contestants, encased
 in heavy armor, seated on stately, champing
 horses ;
 I hear the shouts—the sounds of blows and smiting
 steel :
 I see the Crusaders' tumultuous armies—Hark ! how
 the cymbals clang !
 Lo ! where the monks walk in advance, bearing the
 cross on high !

5.

Blow again, trumpeter ! and for thy theme,
 Take now the enclosing theme of all—the solvent and
 the setting ;
Love, that is pulse of all—the sustenance and the
 pang ; .

The heart of man and woman all for love ;
 No other theme but love—knitting, enclosing, all-dif-
 fusing love.

O, how the immortal phantoms crowd around me !
 I see the vast alembic ever working—I see and know
 the flames that heat the world ;
 The glow, the blush, the beating hearts of lovers,
 So blissful happy some—and some so silent, dark, and
 nigh to death :
 Love, that is all the earth to lovers—Love, that mocks
 time and space ;
 Love, that is day and night—Love, that is sun and
 moon and stars ;
 Love, that is crimson, sumptuous, sick with perfume ;
 No other words, but words of love—no other thought
 but Love.

6.

Blow again, trumpeter—conjure war's wild alarums.

Swift to thy spell, a shuddering hum like distant
 thunder rolls ;
 Lo ! where the arm'd men hasten—Lo ! mid the
 clouds of dust, the glint of bayonets ;
 I see the grime-faced cannoniers—I mark the rosy
 flash amid the smoke—I hear the cracking of the
 guns ;
 —Nor war alone—thy fearful music-song, wild player,
 brings every sight of fear,
 The deeds of ruthless brigands—rapine, murder—I
 hear the cries for help !
 I see ships foundering at sea—I behold on deck, and
 below deck, the terrible tableaux.

7.

O trumpeter ! methinks I am myself the instrument
thou playest !
Thou melt'st my heart, my brain—thou movest, draw-
est, changest them, at will :
And now thy sullen notes send darkness through me ;
Thou takest away all cheering light—all hope :
I see the enslaved, the overthrown, the hurt, the op-
prest of the whole earth ;
I feel the measureless shame and humiliation of my
race—it becomes all mine ;
Mine too the revenges of humanity—the wrongs of
ages—baffled feuds and hatreds ;
Utter defeat upon me weighs—all lost ! the foe vic-
torious !
(Yet 'mid the ruins Pride colossal stands, unshaken to
the last ;
Endurance, resolution, to the last.)

8.

Now, trumpeter, for thy close,
Vouchsafe a higher strain than any yet ;
Sing to my soul—renew its languishing faith and
hope ;
Rouse up my slow belief—give me some vision of the
future ;
Give me, for once, its prophecy and joy.

O glad, exulting, culminating song !
A vigor more than earth's is in thy notes !
Marches of victory—man disenthral'd—the con-
queror at last !

Hymns to the universal God, from universal Man—
all joy !

A reborn race appears—a perfect World, all joy !
Women and Men, in wisdom, innocence and health—
all joy !

Riotous, laughing bacchanals, fill'd with joy !
War, sorrow, suffering gone—The rank earth purged
—nothing but joy left !

The ocean fill'd with joy—the atmosphere all joy !
Joy ! Joy ! in freedom, worship, love ! Joy in the
ecstasy of life !

Enough to merely be ! Enough to breathe !
Joy ! Joy ! all over Joy !

O STAR OF FRANCE !

1870-71.

1.

O STAR of France !
The brightness of thy hope and strength and fame,
Like some proud ship that led the fleet so long;
Beseems to-day a wreck, driven by the gale—a mast-
less hulk ;
And 'mid its teeming, madden'd, half-drown'd
crowds,
Nor helm nor helmsman.

2.

Dim, smitten star !
Orb not of France alone—pale symbol of my soul, its
dearest hopes,
The struggle and the daring—rage divine for liberty,
Of aspirations toward the far ideal—enthusiast's
dreams of brotherhood,
Of terror to the tyrant and the priest.

3.

Star crucified ! by traitors sold !
Star panting o'er a land of death—heroic land !
Strange, passionate, mocking, frivolous land.

Miserable ! yet for thy errors, vanities, sins, I will not
now rebuke thee ;
Thy unexampled woes and pangs have quell'd them
all,
And left thee sacred.

In that amid thy many faults, thou ever aimedst
 highly,
 In that thou wouldst not really sell thyself, however
 great the price,
 In that thou surely wakedst weeping from thy
 drugg'd sleep,
 In that alone, among thy sisters, thou, Giantess, didst
 rend the ones that shamed thee,
 In that thou couldst not, wouldst not, wear the usual
 chains,
 This cross, thy livid face, thy pierced hands and feet,
 The spear thrust in thy side.

4.

O star ! O ship of France, beat back and baffled long !
 Bear up, O smitten orb ! O ship, continue on !

Sure, as the ship of all, the Earth itself,
 Product of deathly fire and turbulent chaos,
 Forth from its spasms of fury and its poisons,
 Issuing at last in perfect power and beauty,
 Onward, beneath the sun, following its course,
 So thee, O ship of France !

Finish'd the days, the clouds dispell'd,
 The travail o'er, the long-sought extrication,
 When lo ! reborn, high o'er the European world,
 (In gladness, answering thence, as face afar to face,
 reflecting ours, Columbia.)
 Again thy star, O France—fair, lustrous star,
 In heavenly peace, clearer, more bright than ever,
 Shall beam immortal.

VIRGINIA—THE WEST.

1.

THE noble Sire, fallen on evil days,
I saw, with hand uplifted, menacing, brandishing,
(Memories of old in abeyance—love and faith in
abeyance,)
The insane knife toward the Mother of All.

2.

THE noble Son, on sinewy feet advancing,
I saw—out of the land of prairies—land of Ohio's
waters, and of Indiana,
To the rescue, the stalwart giant, hurry his plenteous
offspring,
Drest in blue, bearing their trusty rifles on their
shoulders.

3.

Then the Mother of All, with calm voice speaking,
As to you, Virginia, (I seemed to hear her say,) why
strive against me—and why seek my life?
When you yourself forever provide to defend me?
For you provided me Washington—and now these also.

BY BROAD POTOMAC'S SHORE.

1.

By broad Potomac's shore—again, old tongue !
(Still uttering—still ejaculating—canst never cease
this babble ?)
Again, old heart so gay—again to you, your sense,
the full flush spring returning ;
Again the freshness and the odors—again Virginia's
summer sky, pellucid blue and silver,
Again the forenoon purple of the hills,
Again the deathless grass, so noiseless, soft and green,
Again the blood-red roses blooming.

2.

Perfume this book of mine, O blood-red roses !
Lave subtly with your waters every line, Potomac !
Give me of you, O spring, before I close, to put
between its pages !
O forenoon purple of the hills, before I close, of you !
O smiling earth—O summer sun, give me of you !
O deathless grass, of you !



WALT WHITMAN'S BOOKS.

 *Can be Ordered of any Bookseller.*

Leaves of Grass. Complete. Edition 1872. Comprises all the Poems of the Editions of 1855, '57, '60, and '67; with added Pieces. 504 pages, cloth. Price, \$3.

A reader taking up this volume for the first time needs an emphatic warning given him in advance. Of "poetry" in the accepted sense, and according to the current market supply of that article in Europe and America, he must be notified to expect little or nothing—no rhyme, nor regularity, nor love stories, nor any of the sugar-flavors or ornamentations customary in verse. He will be perplexed still worse. Ordinary rules of correct writing, so as to be understood while you go along, are not followed by this voice from the sea-beach—this chanter from Paumanok.* Neither will the book bear any analogy. Most poets are profitably compared with, and set off by, their brother bards, like flowers in a bouquet; but it would only be an aggravation to compare Walt Whitman with others—either with the great past poets, or the later ones of England, such as Tennyson or Browning; or those of our own country, Bryant, Emerson, or Longfellow. *LEAVES OF GRASS* is *sui generis*, and if not advanced beyond all, of incomparable excellence and altitude, the work is (as stoutly maintained by many cultivated people) a failure and fraud, sinking below every thing. There is no middle ground.

The Paumanok poet also differs from others in an avowed purpose to express his own special personality out and out. According to the theory of his verse, a legitimate and even indispensable part of it is to "celebrate" and clearly define the individual identity he himself either is, or of which he contains the elements, and aims to become. That he only *writes about himself*—a criticism often sneeringly brought against him—is, in fact, the very object of his appearance in literature, which is, briefly, to formulate in a poem, with unprecedented candor, a complete human being, body, mind, emotions, soul. It is himself typically, however, and for an ultimate purpose.

* Paumanok, (or Paumanake, or Paumanack,) the aboriginal name of Long Island, New-York. A peculiar region, over a hundred miles long, shaped like a fish—plenty of sea-shore, sandy, stormy, uninviting, the horizon boundless, the air healthy, but too strong for invalids, the bays a wonderful resort for aquatic birds, the south-side meadows covered with salt hay, the soil of the island generally tough, but good for the locust-tree, the apple orchard, and the blackberry, and with numberless springs of the sweetest water in the world.

Years ago, among the bay-men—a strong, wild race, now extinct, or rather entirely changed—a native of Long Island was called a *Paumanacker*, or *Creele-Paumanacker*.

The book weaves and twines in everywhere the different products, climates, and all and each of the several United States, by their nomenclature, the South as much as the North—not a single State or city, and hardly a river or mountain left out; all-knitted and twisted together, so that their entire geography and hydrography are fused in its pages. Amid these, the figure of the author continually appears, recording his own personal habits, memoranda, portraits,* surrounded by his times, his country, the Secession war, the great inventions and leading occurrences, the rendition of Burns in Boston, the visits of the Prince of Wales, the Japanese embassy, the arrival of the Great Eastern, the meteors of 1859, the death of President Lincoln, the Peabody bequests, the return of the armies, their review in Washington in 1865, and similar accompaniments.

But inside of all, and the real summing-up of all, and running through the book, and holding it together, the vertebra-purpose of *LEAVES OF GRASS* is to present the model and ideal portrait—for the service of the New World, and designed to be gradually absorbed in it—of a complete, healthy, heroic, industrial, *AVERAGE MODERN MAN*, physical, emotional, moral, mental, patriotic, spiritual—a grander, better, completer son, brother, husband, father, citizen, friend, than any yet—formed and shaped in consonance with latest, largest science, with the genius of American democracy, and with the requirements of daily business in work-shop, or office, or on farm, or ship-board;—a model also of the *AVERAGE WOMAN*, equally modern and heroic—a daughter, wife, mother, citizen, also better, completer than any yet. The poems throughout tend to construct such definite, living Personalities, male and female, immensely animal, with immense passions, immense amateness, immense paternity in the man, immense maternity in the woman—and then immenser far in moral conscience and decorum, and in constantly realizing the control, direct and indirect, of the divine laws, through all and over all forever. That “Unprecedented health and hilarity, and a constitutional aversion to meanness and impurity, would be the characteristics of a race, born and grown in consonance with these poems,” is said to be the haughty claim made by the author himself.

The history of the gradual development of Walt Whitman's poems is significant, almost geologic. The author having formed his plan, commenced carrying it out at the age of 35 years—“in perfect health, hoping to cease not till death.” This was in Brooklyn, New-York, in 1855. The small nucleus-volume then issued was received, both in England and America—as far as it attracted any attention—with unmitigated torrents of mockery and derisive laughter—the echoes of which are still occasionally heard. [See

* His portrait, as in 1872, (aged 52,) photographed from life, in Washington, precedes the text; and in “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” (composed at the time,) is given another picture, in shirt-sleeves and open neck, impromptu, daguerreotype from life by Gabriel Harrison, Fulton street, Brooklyn, on a warm July day in 1854.

[The portraits are deferred till next edition.]

John Burroughs's little published volume of "NOTES."] Upon and around this nucleus-volume of 1855, have since been steadily formed gradual accretions, published in 1857, in 1860, in 1867, and lastly in 1872—each part of these accretions designed strictly with reference to its relative fitness in the whole—"the completed volume being best understood," as has been said, "when viewed as such a series of growths, or strata, rising out from a settled foundation or centre."

"There is probably no analogous case in the history of literature where the result of a profound artistic plan or conception—first launched forth, and briefly, yet sufficiently exemplified, as in the small volume of the LEAVES of 1855, taking for foundation Man in his fulness of blood, power, amateness, health, physique, and as standing in the midst of the objective world—a plan so steadily adhered to, yet so audaciously and freely built out of and upon, and with such epic consistency, after that start of 1855, developed in '57, '60, and '66, in successive moral, esthetic, and religious stages, each absorbing the previous ones, but striding on far ahead of them—gradually made more and more emotional, meditative, and patriotic—vitalized, heated to almost unbearable fervency by the author's personal part in the war, composing his songs of it in actual contact with its subjects, on the very field, or surrounded by the wounded "after the battle brought in"—chanting undismayed the strong chant of the Inseparable Union, amid the vehement crises and stormy dangers of the period; and so gradually arriving at the completed book of 1871-2, and crowning all in it with the electric and solemn poems of death and immortality—has so justified, and beyond measure justified, its first ambitious plan and promise."—*John Burroughs's NOTES.*

The basis on which the work stands will probably finally be discovered and agreed to be the Religious basis—the reference of every possible event to a divine purpose, and unfolding. The book is the song of Idealism. Underneath every page lurks the conviction that all we fancy we see, may be but apparitions—and that

"The real Something has yet to be known."

Its scope and purpose are, therefore, by no means merely intellectual, or ecclesiastical, or esthetic. Using the term in its latest and largest, and not at all in its dogmatic and scholastic sense, Walt Whitman's poetry is, in its intention, *philosophic*. It is beyond the moral law, and will probably therefore always appal many. The moral law, it is true, is present, penetrating the verse, like shafts of light. But the whole relentless kosmos out of which come monsters and crime and the inexhaustible germs of all the heat of sex, and all the lawless rut and arrogant greed of the universe, and especially of the human race, are also there. Strange and paradoxical are these pages. They accept and celebrate Nature in absolute faith. Then, as over and out of some unbounded sea of turmoil, and whirl and hiss of stormy waves, hurrying and tumbling and chaotic—which they largely are—still, by attempts, indications, at least, rise voices, sounds of the mightiest strength and gladdest hope yet given to man, with undismayed, unfaltering faith in destiny and life.

"The history of the book, thus considered, not only resembles and tallies, in certain respects, the development of the great System of Idealistic Philoso-

phy in Germany, by the 'illustrious four'—except that the development of *LEAVES OF GRASS* has been carried on within the region of a single mind,—but it is to be demonstrated, by study and comparison, that the same theory of the essential identity of the spiritual and the material worlds, the shows of nature, the progress of civilization, the play of passions, the human intellect, and the relations between it and the concrete universe, which Kant prepared the way for, and Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel have given expression and statement in their system of transcendental Metaphysics—this author has, with equal entirety, expressed and stated in *LEAVES OF GRASS*, from a poet's point of view—singing afresh, out of it, the song of the visible and invisible worlds—renewing, reconstructing, consistently with the modern genius, and deeper and wider than ever, the promises of immortality—endowing the elements of faith and pride with a vigor and *ensemble* before unknown—and furnishing to the measureless audience of humanity the only great Imaginative Work it yet possesses, in which the objective universe and Man, his soul, are observed and outlined, and the theory of Human Personality and Character projected, from the anterior and hidden, but absolute background, of that magnificent System."
—*John Burroughs's* NOTES.

It will always remain, however, impossible to clearly and fully state either the theory of Walt Whitman's composition, or describe his poems, its results. They may be absorbed out of themselves, but only after many perusals. They are elusive and puzzling, like their model, Nature, and form, in fact, a *person*, perhaps a *spirit*, more than a book. They read clearest tête-à-tête, and in the open air, or by the sea, or on the mountains, or in one's own room, alone, at night. They are to be inhaled, like perfumes, and felt, like the magnetism of a presence. They require affinity in the tastes and qualities of the reader. There is, mainly, that in them akin to concrete objects, the earth, the animals, storms, the actual sunrise or sunset, and not to the usual fine writing or imagery of poems. Yet their subject is not abstract or irrational Nature, but living, heart-beating humanity, with all its interests and aspirations, its sadness and its joy.

It is to be added that the whole work, as it now stands, the complete result of the several accretions, singularly hinges on the late Secession war.

Democratic Vistas. Prose. 64 pages. Price, 75 cts.

"In *DEMOCRATIC VISTAS* I seek to make realized the appalling vacuum, our times and here, of any great Imaginative Literature or Art, or spirit of Literature or Art, fit to nourish a Republican and Religious people; and to suggest and prophecy such a Literature and Art as the only means of sustaining and perpetuating such a people. I wish to put on record the rough sketch or outline, if no more, of a new breed of authors, poets, artists for America—comprehensive, Hegelian, Democratic, sacerdotal."—*Letter from Walt Whitman.*

After All, not to Create Only. Poem. 24 pp. Price, 30 cts. Roberts Brothers, Boston.

Delivered orally by the author, on invitation of the Managers of the American Institute, in the midst of crowded examples of pro-

ducts, goods, machinery, etc., gathered in a two-acre edifice, "the Rink," on Third Avenue, New-York, at mid-day, September 7th, 1871. The piece celebrates Industrial life and Inventions, and hinges on the grand design of the Institute to build a vast structure, or group of structures, for a permanent and hitherto unequalled Universal Rendezvous and Fair of specimens of all the Trades, Materials, Engines, and Manufactures of the working World—and for Science and Art.

As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free. Poems. 40 pp.
Price, 50 cts.

The leading piece in this volume, and giving name to it, is the Annual Commencement Poem, delivered on invitation of the Public Literary Societies of Dartmouth College, N. H., June 26th, 1872. It is an expression and celebration of the coming mentality and literature of the United States—not only the great scientists "already visible," but the great artists, poets, littérateurs, yet unknown.

The "Mystic Trumpeter," and "Star of France," and indeed all Walt Whitman's other pieces since 1871-'2, follow.

These—the poems of the author's elder age—are the surplusage of LEAVES OF GRASS—the wake following that volume, as the eddies behind a ship.

Book by JOHN BURROUGHS on Walt Whitman.

Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person. By JOHN BURROUGHS. Second edition. Cloth. Pp. 126. Published by J. S. Redfield, 140 Fulton street, New-York. Price, \$1.

These "NOTES" have a double, or perhaps triple purpose—to give what may be called the typographical history of LEAVES OF GRASS, especially of its first or initial edition, with the reception thereof in 1855; and also of the issues of 1857, '60, '67, and '72; to present various literary and critical opinions upon the volume and on poetry generally, and on "Beauty," with reference to Walt Whitman's method; and also to furnish some candid personal memoranda and a short biographical sketch of the Paumanok bard. By the latter it appears he was born in 1819, brought up in Brooklyn and New-York, and received only an ordinary education. Mr. Burroughs, defending these personal memoranda, says: "I doubt whether Walt Whitman's writings can be realized or understood, except through first knowing or getting a true notion of the corporeal man and his manners, and coming in rapport with them." The "Notes" are most interesting in these characteristic personal facts, gathered by a shrewd and perceptive writer, a born naturalist, who has had an intimate acquaintance with his subject, indoors and outdoors, for many years, and who speaks from a friendly point of view.

Walt Whitman personally is a study, affording the strongest lights and shades. With all his hauteur and his instincts of perfection, he by no means sets up for a saint, but is a full-blooded fellow, with a life showing past blunders and missteps, and a spirit not only tolerant toward weak and sinful mortals, but probably a secret leaning toward them. Then he has not escaped the fate of Personalities who rouse public attention, and canards, by originality and independence. Perhaps, too, he has that affectation sometimes seen—a grim amusement in tacitly taunting and inviting them. Singularly simple and plain, few men are so beloved as he—few have ever so magnetized; yet none afford more temptation to caricature, or bogus anecdotes. The late summing-up of a first-rate judge of human nature, that *personal knowledge* of him unerringly dissipates such fictions, is the best disposal of this point.

 All the forementioned Books for sale by

J. S. REDFIELD, 140 Fulton street, New-York.

B. F. FELT, 43 Mercer street, New-York.

SAMPSON LOW & CO., 188 Fleet St., London.

TRUBNER & CO., 8 AND 60 Paternoster Row, London.

FOREIGN CRITICISM ON WALT WHITMAN.

A very lengthy, and in some respects remarkable criticism, on the poems of Walt Whitman, with full biographical details of that personage, have just appeared in a leading Scandinavian monthly magazine, *For Ide og Virkelighed*, ("For the Idea and Reality,") at Copenhagen, Denmark. Like the '*Westminster Review*' of last summer, the *Ide* assumes that the poetical writers of America have none of them hitherto accepted the current practical facts, or spirit, or the democratic politics of the actual United States; as the foundation or background of their poetry; but that they have shunned or ignored those facts, and that their verse, to all intents and purposes, has only been a continuation of the old European poetic standards, feudal beliefs, and forms.

The Scandinavian reviewer (like the *Westminster* critic) asserts that Whitman is the first literary *esthetik* in America who has deliberately based a lyrical utterance for the American States squarely on their own present political, social, industrial, and even military conditions and character, and who has undertaken to root their verse on their own soil and give it hues and flavors of its own; addressing himself not at all to the audiences of the European world or the past, but quite altogether to the audiences of the present and future of the American and democratic world.

The *Ide* (which makes great account of the *motif* of the poems, and brings prominently forward Mr. Whitman's small prose book, "Democratic Vistas," from which it gives copious extracts) says it must be candidly admitted that the American poet has not the elegance, special melody, nor *recherché* aroma of the accepted poets of Europe or his own country; but that his compass and general harmony are infinitely greater. He says the sweetness and spice, the poetic *ennui*, the tender longings, the exquisite art-finish of those choice poets are mainly unseen and unmet in him—perhaps because he cannot achieve them—more likely because he disdains them. But there is an electric *living soul* in his poetry, far more fermenting and bracing. His wings do not glitter in their movement from rich and vari-colored plumage, nor are his notes those of the accustomed song-birds; but his flight is the flight of the eagle.

The current Danish version of the Old Testament is mentioned by the Copenhagen reviewer as the nearest suggestion of the American poet's style which he is able to give his readers. He translates, "O Captain! my Captain!" and also prints it in the original. He makes free use of Mr. John Burroughs's "Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person;" also, the "Woman's Estimate" of Mrs. Anne Gilchrist, of England, and the previously mentioned *Westminster* criticism, by Professor Dowden, of Trinity College, Dublin.

The *Ide* concludes by saying of its own criticism—which occupies fully half its February number—that it is beginning to be the opinion of the most thoughtful men of the Old and New Worlds, that the long prophesied and fondly expected new epoch of liberalization for humanity, is more likely to prove, whenever it comes,

not so much a new epoch in politics and Government, but a new epoch in literature ; and that it has devoted its pages to an elaborate statement of Walt Whitman, because of this epoch it considers the advent of him and his writings the most significant sign.
—*N. Y. Commercial Advertiser*, April, 1872.

Publications Critical and Personal Relating to LEAVES OF GRASS and their Author.

LEAVES OF GRASS IMPRINTS. 64 pp. 16mo. Thayer & Eldridge, Boston, 1860.

THE GOOD GRAY POET: *a Vindication*. By W. D. O'CONNOR. Bunce & Huntington, New-York, 1866. 46 pp. 8vo.

REVIEW, "WALT WHITMAN," by FERDINAND FREILIGRATH, with translations. Printed serially in three numbers *Augsburger Allgemeinen Zeitung*, in 1868.

A WOMAN'S ESTIMATE OF WALT WHITMAN. Letters to W. M. Rossetti from an Englishwoman, (Mrs. Ann Gilchrist.) The *Radical* magazine for May, 1870, Boston, Mass.

WESTMINSTER AND FOREIGN QUARTERLY REVIEW, England, July, 1871. Article, "*The Poetry of Democracy: Walt Whitman.*" (By Prof. Edward Dowden, Trinity College, Dublin.)

A STUDY OF WALT WHITMAN, THE POET OF MODERN DEMOCRACY. By Hon. RICHARD NOEL. The *Dark Blue*, England, October and November, 1871.

FOR IDE OG VIRKELIGHED, (for the Idea and Reality,) monthly magazine. Copenhagen, Denmark, February, 1872. Article, "*Walt Whitman, det Amerikanske Demokratis Digter.*" By Rudolf Schmidt.





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